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INDICULUS SYNTACTICUS.¹

In pursuance of a plan long entertained of gathering up and bringing into a reasonable compass what seemed to me the most important things I have had to say about the study of Greek Syntax, I proceeded to make for my own use an index of my deliverances in the *Journal*, a laborious task, a task for which I have little natural aptitude and one accomplished not without heartsinking, *Vitam perdidit*, said a certain one, *laboriose nihil agendo*. My own sum of doctrine for the teaching of beginners returned to plague me. It has been quoted not infrequently in the last forty years. Maximum of Forms, Minimum of Syntax, Early Contact with the Language in Mass. Precious little syntax does one need for what may be called the surface enjoyment of literature, and may it not be said here also that beauty is skin deep? How many of the languages that an average scholar reads, ay, and enjoys, does he know down to the finer subtleties of syntax? Is a man to be debarred from reading Cervantes in the original because he has not mastered a Johns Hopkins dissertation on the Moods in *Don Quijote*? The impatient reader might well cry out with Sancho: *en priesa me ves y doncellez me demandas*. Aesthetic syntax is just such a kittle thing as Sancho's impossibility.

And yet as I come to the end of things I am unrepentant. I survey the long course of my studies, and for once take myself seriously, as if that course were worth while. My first interest in Greek Syntax after I had passed the *béjaune* stage was practical, as I have set forth elsewhere. I tried to get a better formulation of the phenomena for the sake of my classes, and fancied that I succeeded here and there. Then there came, not all at once, the conviction of the importance of syntax for the appreciation of the various ranges of literature and the art of the individual. Finally all this formulation, all this classification, all this road-making, so to speak, seemed to bring me to the point where I could hope to gain some insight into the way in which the Greek spirit strove to work out the problems of architectural speech—historical syntax in the true sense of the word, not what passes for such, not the mechanical registry of the phenomena as they emerge in literature. The history of Greek syntax is the history of the soul

¹ In lieu of *Brief Mention*. Motto: *nec, ut soles, dabis iocos*.

of the Greek people. Of course, there are those who claim for themselves, or for others, immediate vision, those who see Hellenism face to face as the Logos beheld God, who write books on the Greek Genius without even a respectable knowledge of Greek. That immediate vision is denied to most of the students of the Greek language, and the poor brothers of the guild to which I belong must toil along the lines that so many have followed and have died without the sight. Even the best of us can only divine. For why? We know the ancient tongue only after it has passed into the stage of consciousness, and there is an impassable air-line between consciousness and sympathy. One cannot thrill to the still voice of the Hellene. Even the rude inscription involves reflective scratching of the head, biting of the nails, thrusting of the tongue in the cheek. The stone-cutter and the poetaster are of the same guild. Now, I have reason to believe that my work in the three lines indicated has interested a number of Hellenists, and as the indexes to my Justin Martyr and to my Pindar are fairly complete, I have fancied that I might do some slight service by incorporating in the Journal itself instead of retaining for my own use a list of my syntactical observations as they have been recorded in the thirty-six volumes which I have been permitted to complete. It is not likely that there will be any considerable additions to the number. In earlier days my righteous soul may have been vexed by the silent appropriation of the results of my work. The Greek *νεμεσάν* is a legitimate feeling, but if I am not 'past feeling', like the Scriptural reprobate, that feeling is chiefly one of amusement at the claims of discovery that are put forward from time to time, partly, perhaps largely, from the fact that in reviewing the course of my decades of study I have found that what I had thought was my own achievement, may have been little more than reminiscence. *τὰ μὲν δ' ἐμά* is often a vain boast. If, however, these thirty-six volumes contain anything about Greek syntax that is really mine, any satisfactory formula, any new line of research, any fresh illustration, this index will not have been prepared in vain for those who sympathize with the studies of my many years.

As a youthful critic I noted with a boy's superiority how often Longfellow repeated the simile contained in the verses: As if Diana in her dreams | Had dropt her silver bow | Upon the meadows low. Many, many years afterwards I assigned as a seminary exercise Repetitions in Aristophanes. This number registers an article on Repetitions in ancient authors (p. 99). And now after a rapid survey of the Journal from the beginning I am in a position to indite a paper on Repetitions in *Brief Mention*. My consolation must be the company I have kept.

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